

Garrotson House
Totowa Road
Totowa, Passaic County, New Jersey

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PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA
District of New Jersey

Historic American Buildings Survey
Seymour Williams, F.A.I.A., District Officer
133 Central Avenue, Rahway, New Jersey

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Garretson House
Totowa Road
Totowa, Passaic County, New Jersey

Owner: John G. Garretson

Date of Erection: About 1750

Architect:

Builder:

Present Condition: Good

Number of Stories: Two main house and wing

Materials of Construction: Foundation - stone

Exterior walls - brownstone;
frame gables

Interior walls - plaster;
fireplace end of dining
room paneled

Inside brick chimneys

Roof - pitch, dormers later date

Historical Data:

The present owner claims the house was built about 1740 by a John Van Allen from whom he is a descendant. Dr. Rauchfuss, curator of the Dey Mansion, NJ-17, agrees as to the builder but gives the date as 1761. However, the records in Passaic and Bergen counties do not seem to bear out this contention. The present owner John G. Garretson received the property

through the will of his mother Margaret Ann Garretson. She in turn had received it from her grandmother Margaret Van Allen who died in 1879. Margaret Van Allen had a son John the father of Margaret Ann who died before she did. Margaret Ann had married Ralph Garretsch. By will of Peter I., or possibly Peter J., Van Allen who died in 1873 the property was left to his wife Margaret.

The section now known as Totowa was formerly the township of Manchester, Passaic County, and before that the township of Saddle River, Bergen County. The records show that in 1833 Peter J. Van Allen received several plots of land from John Van Allen and others in the township of Saddle River part of which is described "the first lot being the homestead of the late John Van Allen". A further search reveals that John Van Allen bought these tracts mentioned as at Totowa from Robert Van Houten and Lena his wife in 1817. There were several tracts involved and the description reads, "the first lot is the homestead where the said Robert Van Houten now lives". The rest of the description is the same as in the 1833 deed.

It would appear from this, although there is no certainty other than that the property described is in the approximate location where the present house now stands, that the whole tract once belonged to the Van Houtens. An examination of the deeds in this vicinity shows that at one time the Van Houtens owned practically all of the land here. From the records, it seems that Robert Van Houten was a son of Roeliff Van Houten, and that he bought the property from other heirs of whom there were fifteen. If this is correct a Roeliff Van Houte as he is called in the earlier records received title in 1740 from a Gerrit Van Aale who got title four years before from a Peter Van Aalen.

Bibliography:

A search of Passaic and Bergen Counties
court records by Frank P. Caufield,
Essex County Office

Information from the present owner
John G. Garretson and Dr. Rauchfuss,
curator of the Dey Mansion

Atlas of Passaic County, New Jersey
New York, E. B. Hyde and Company,
n.d. (1877)

William E. Radt
Supervising Historian

Approved:

Lymon W. Williams
LYMON WILLIAMS, F.A.I.A.
District Officer